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Leading *the Way*



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Leisure & Sport Studies

Crossing the Boundary

A STUDY OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF RACISM IN
LOCAL LEAGUE CRICKET

By Jonathan Long, Mark Nesti, Ben Carrington, Nick Gilson



LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

CROSSING THE BOUNDARY

A study of the nature and extent of racism
in local league cricket

by

Jonathan Long, Mark Nesti, Ben Carrington, Nick Gilson
School of Leisure & Sports Studies
Leeds Metropolitan University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the research project described in this report was to study the nature and extent of racism in local league cricket. Because of the support of Leeds City Council (Sports Division) we focused our inquiries on the clubs playing in and around Leeds, but also extended our research to include other parts of 'Yorkshire', including Bradford with higher proportions of cricketers from minority ethnic groups and East Yorkshire where almost all players are white.

While cricket is commonly seen as being quintessentially 'English' (and Yorkshire), it is also an integral part of the modern cultural identity of many minority ethnic groups.

The research was conducted in a summer when fighting with a racial dimension broke out on the Western Terrace at Headingley during the Test Match. Accusations of racial prejudice were being traded from the winter tour of the national team and other heated debates from the past year, like those concerning the alleged lack of commitment by England's black cricketers, were still fresh in people's minds.

The research was conducted in a way similar to our earlier study of racism in rugby league. The three basic components of the project were: a postal questionnaire to club secretaries; interviews with players (white, Asian and African-Caribbean); and group interviews with league umpires. These were supported by observation at matches (local league games, the one day international and the Test Match at Headingley), monitoring the national and cricket press and reviewing the academic literature on related issues; and informal interviews and discussions with spectators, former players and writers.

Two thirds of **club secretaries** who responded had played cricket themselves at this level, over half were aged 45 or more and almost all were men. Only seven per cent reported that they came from a minority ethnic group (Asian). Two out of every five respondents indicated that none of their players (senior and junior) were from minority ethnic backgrounds, while ten per cent had over half. Less than one in five had any committee members from minority ethnic groups. Only just over a third said they retained an overseas player; although 21 per cent felt they had a negative impact on local league cricket, they were outnumbered by more than two to one.

Despite popular cricketing stereotypes few club secretaries attributed particular characteristics to Asian or African-Caribbean players. Some twenty per cent thought they could identify special characteristics (physical, mental and socio-cultural) that suited both Asian and African-Caribbean players to cricket - twice as many as perceived limitations in Asian players, and hardly any perceived limitations in players because they were African-Caribbean.

No negative physical attributes were associated with either ethnic minority. Both Asians and African-Caribbeans were thought to have good temperaments and a large amount of enthusiasm, arising from their love of cricket and supported by tradition. However, some suggested that both ethnic groups lack a degree of discipline in their approach to the game. Some also suggested that Asians in particular found it difficult to integrate within a predominantly white team structure

(suggesting that religious beliefs and/or family commitments might compromise their loyalty to the team).

Forty per cent thought that sledging was acceptable as just part of the game or sometimes acceptable; 12 per cent said abuse received by players because of the colour of their skin was acceptable or sometimes acceptable (very similar to the 13% of rugby league fans who responded in this way to the same question for their sport). Although only 10 per cent said racism was non-existent, three quarters thought there was only a small amount. Club secretaries seemed to think that racism was more extensive in league cricket than at the county level. Only 23 per cent thought that ethnic minority players got picked on at some clubs. Half maintained that there were never any racist remarks from their own team or supporters, though 30 per cent were of the view that this happened. More than three quarters thought that 'too much is made of this black/white thing - in cricket they're all the same'.

Although many maintained that their club was open to all, few had made positive efforts to encourage black and ethnic minority players. The vast majority were not supportive of setting up Asian leagues (only 14% in favour); most commonly because of a feeling that segregation is intrinsically bad and that it may itself encourage racism (all club secretaries who said they were Asian thought that such leagues did help cricket development). Opinion was divided on whether a campaign like Let's Kick Racism Out of Football would be useful in cricket at the county/national level.

Two thirds of the club secretaries thought Yorkshire County Cricket Club had been right to abandon the 'Yorkshire only' policy. Although opinion was divided, there was a slight balance in agreement with the proposition that Asian and black people living in England should support the England cricket team, but there was hardly any support for the argument that Asian and black cricketers might find it difficult to perform to their full potential if playing for England.

Most **players** from minority ethnic groups claimed to have experienced racism in the game, and most of the white players recognised that this did happen. However, several players suggested that expressions of racism were more of a problem pre- or post-match than during the game itself. Most players still felt that cricket was better in this respect than society in general.

On the whole players tended not to emphasise particular playing characteristics for each group, although, there were references to Asians being more subtle, African-Caribbeans being more athletic and inventive, and 'Anglo-Saxons' being more disciplined or controlled in their approach. The major controversy here surrounded Asian players using their own language/s during matches. This is perceived by some white players as being provocative and liable to exacerbate racial tensions.

Almost all players were strongly in favour of overseas players being involved in the game, although some stressed that this operated best where the player gave 'something back', perhaps by being actively involved in youth development or coaching. Likewise, the majority of players felt that Yorkshire CCC could only be strengthened by attracting players from all ethnic groups in the county. However, a sizeable proportion of white players, and all ethnic minority players believed that not enough was being done to recruit and identify local players from ethnic minorities to play for Yorkshire.

From a broader perspective, players were asked to comment on the question of whether Asian and black English players would perform fully when representing England in a match. The consistent view expressed was that top players always give their all due to professional pride in their own performance, and so as not to let down their own family and community. A follow-up question on the issue of support for national teams revealed that most Asian and black players would support their 'countries of origin' first and England second. Most white players emphasised that they thought that people ought to feel able to support who they wanted, although several white players stated that people should support the land of their birth, irrespective of origin.

The umpires felt that Asian players caused increased and unnecessary tension by not using English in their discussions on the pitch. In addition, the umpires were much more committed to ideas of 'natural differences' in playing characteristics between the different groups. Asian players in particular received considerable criticism for the perception that they were prepared to do anything to win. In contrast, black players were generally described in terms of positive stereotypes relating to their flamboyance, enthusiasm, and all-round athleticism.

The umpires claimed that sledging and general abuse between players and teams rarely involved a racial dimension and was often worst between two white teams. They stressed that they saw their role as ensuring that the spirit of cricket prevailed, and that they would enforce the rules with vigour if they detected racism in matches. One of the main themes throughout the umpires' discussions was that the game has become more aggressive and less 'fair-minded' at all levels and that money and the constant talking in the game had had a very negative impact.

The umpires generally felt that Yorkshire CCC were doing all that could be expected to encourage ethnic minority players into the teams, however, one or two dissenting voices doubted the level of active commitment shown by Yorkshire.

Possibly the most striking divergence of opinion from the players was over the use of overseas players in local cricket. The umpires were generally against this, and called for a much more cautious approach, to ensure that pathways for the development of local talent were not obstructed. The umpires stressed that school cricket and the development of junior teams at clubs was the most pressing concern facing the game locally and nationally.

Conclusions and recommendations emanating from the research include:

- * There is a strongly held view amongst all groups, and especially the players that the 'spirit of cricket', and the traditional ethos attached to the game protects it from much of the destructive racism that permeates some other sports and society in general.
- * Almost all respondents and interviewees, feel that more (much more according to players from ethnic minority groups in particular) needs to be done to provide real opportunities for black and Asian players to progress at performance and excellence levels of the sport.
- * Again, there is near unanimity, that much more must be done to increase participation opportunities at grassroots in all communities, including local ethnic minority communities.
- * The call is for action rather than words, and players in particular would like to see more support for coach development, coach education, local talent development centres and more development officers on the ground.
- * There seems to be a clearly held view, again particularly on behalf of the players, that black and Asian cricketers are not progressing as quickly as one would expect in terms of playing for Yorkshire CCC and that this situation needs to be addressed more forcefully by replacing what was seen to be a laissez-faire approach with a more proactive one.
- * Finally, the players in particular seem more prepared than others, to accept that there are racist attitudes in all levels of cricket. However, the overall consensus amongst the different groups was that overt examples of racist behaviour were less prominent (though not absent) in cricket than in most sports or society in general. This, of course, does not imply that there is no need for steps to try to eradicate the racism that is evidenced.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Since the start of the 1993/4 football season the 'Let's Kick Racism Out of Football' has had some success in persuading clubs and players to recognise racism in the game and act to counter it. This summer, following our own research (Long et al, 1995) the Rugby Football League and the Commission for Racial Equality launched a 13-point Action Plan for professional clubs to adopt. Within cricket 'Hit Racism for Six' (HR46) was set-up last year to act as a pressure group to stimulate discussion about racism in cricket.

Issues of race and racism in sport have recently attracted considerable media attention and stimulated popular debate. Emotion has run high over the articles by Robert Henderson (1995) and Roger Bannister (Connor 1995), the continuing confrontation between Raymond Illingworth and Devon Malcolm, the Botham/Lamb v Khan court case and the trouble on the terraces at Headingley during the summer of 1996. The balance attempted by programmes in the Radio 5 series on 'Race around the UK' represented one attempt to encourage a more considered approach, but throughout it has been clear that there is still a shortage of substantive research on race in sport.

The Carnegie National Sports Development Centre conducted a study of black and ethnic minorities in cricket in Yorkshire that focused on issues of participation and sports development. Following the success of our rugby league project, Leeds City Council were keen for us to try to explore the more sensitive issues around race and racism. While the study of rugby league had been on the professional game this study of cricket was to be of local league cricket. Within the region this is how most people experience their cricket with some 1,300 teams affiliated to the Yorkshire Cricket Association. To establish views on race and racism we sought responses from:

- a) the secretaries of local league clubs
- b) Asian, black and white players in the leagues
- c) league umpires

Cultural Identity, Cricket and Racism

Leeds City Council is committed to the principle of multi-culturalism and seeks to promote people's understanding of other cultures through its own practices and through support for the work of others like the 'Roots of the Future' exhibition recently hosted by the West Yorkshire Playhouse. Issues surrounding cultural identity and the role of sport lie at the core of what it means to be British for all the racial and ethnic groups of Britain. And, of course, the arena of cricket especially is seen by some to represent the epitome of 'Englishness' (or Yorkshireness). Indeed the Conservative MP, Norman Tebbit famously suggested that one measure of whether or not members of minority communities were part of British (English?) society and eligible for its benefits, was

whether or not they supported the English cricket team during Test matches against the countries of their origin.

One of the clearest examples of cricket's central and problematic place in discussing questions of national identity was the much publicised, and widely criticised, article that Robert Henderson wrote for the respected cricketing magazine *Wisden Cricket Monthly* in July 1995. Following Tebbit's idea of a prescriptive identification with the nation and its cricket team, Henderson questioned the motivation and performance of Asian and black cricketers when playing for England. According to Henderson, Asian and black players (whom he referred to as 'negroes') could not truly give their all when playing for the English test side as they were not 'unequivocal Englishmen', and further that some Asian and black English international players may actually feel some sort of subconscious satisfaction when English sides were defeated. Though no definition was ever given as to what was meant by 'unequivocal Englishmen', it was clear from the article, and subsequent comments, that Henderson was suggesting that only white people should represent England in sporting teams.

However, because of the colonial legacy, cricket has become an important part of other cultures too. The process of formulating our cultural identity is important to us all. Unfortunately, it often seems to be done in a way that requires 'other' people to be defined negatively: disparaging stereotypes can lead to prejudice, abuse and aggression. While the people who were the subject of this study had different racial and ethnic identities, they all had a common element in their cultural identities - cricket.

Asian and Black Involvement in Cricket

The involvement of Asian and black cricketers in English cricket predates the post-war wave of immigration from the Caribbean and South-Asian subcontinent. Indeed, 100 years ago the young Sussex batsmen of Indian descent, Kumar Shir Ranjitsinhji ('Ranji') made cricketing, and possibly sporting, history as the first 'non-white' player to play for an England team. Interestingly, then as now, notable voices such as Lord Harris, were heard questioning the idea of a 'non-Englishman' playing for England but the performances and record of Ranji silenced such critics. He became only the second batsman at that time, after W. G. Grace, to score a century on his debut for England, and finished his career with an outstanding batting average for his era, the so-called 'Golden Age' of cricket, of 56.37 (Midwinter, 1996).

As Ranji's experience illustrated, the struggle of Asian and black cricketers against racism has been central to their experience of cricket in England regardless of their social position. In a more graphic example of this, and predating the 'Basil D'Oliveira affair' by some 40 years, Ranji's talented nephew, K. S. Duleepsinhji, was selected to play for England in the 1929 Test against South Africa, but was forced to step down from the side when the South Africans objected to his inclusion on the basis that he was not white.

There has also been a long history of Asian and black cricketers playing league cricket in England, one of the most notable examples being the great West Indian cricketer (Sir) Learie Constantine who played league cricket for Nelson in Lancashire during the 1930s, and did much to raise both the standard and profile of the game in that area.

Since the late 1960s there has also been a strong presence of Asian and black Test stars playing county cricket. Players of the magnitude of Garfield Sobers, Clive Lloyd, Viv Richards, Sunil Gavaskar and Imran Khan have graced the county circuit and contributed immeasurably to the development of cricket in England and Wales.

More recently a larger number of Asian and black cricketers have played for England, from Min Patel and Nasser Hussain to Devon Malcolm and Chris Lewis, continuing the often neglected but important century old history of Asian and black contribution to British sport in general and cricket in particular.

Racism

All Different, All Equal

1997 has been designated by the European Community as European Year Against Racism with the objectives to 'raise awareness of and disseminate information on racism, xenophobia and anti-semitism'. When 1995 was designated as the International Year of Tolerance, the Council of Europe identified it as the year of action against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance. The Council of Europe adopted the slogan 'All Different, All Equal', but like many other such designations managed to generate very little attention in the UK.

Language and terminology

As with all projects addressing racial issues, we have had to address how to use appropriate language that is unambiguous, does not insult people and matches people's everyday understandings.

In Britain the term 'Black' has been used politically to refer to those who can be distinguished by the colour of their skin and are commonly subjected to prejudice by the white majority as a consequence. However, more recently it has been questioned whether this term adequately encompasses the experiences of Asian communities within Britain (see for example, Modood, 1995). Crucially for this project, we were alert to these complex issues relating to the diverse peoples of African-Caribbean and South-Asian descent. For this reason we have not used the term Black to refer to both African-Caribbeans and Asians as many of the racial stereotypes and expressions used operate in different, although related, ways in relation to these two racialised groups. Recognising the growing unease among some Asians with the term 'black', where we use it in this report it refers specifically to African-Caribbeans.

Appendix 1 presents definitions of key terms offered by Cashmore and Troyna (1983). Most writers in the field would suggest their own fine tuning of these but they are a useful starting point provided by recognised authors within the field of sport and 'race'.

Racism and Racialism

Racism is the belief that the world's population can be divided into discrete categories based on physical genetic differences. This is then associated with the belief that some categories are superior to others and used to justify inequality. More recently it has been suggested that racism in contemporary British society no longer operates through notions of biological superiority / inferiority, but instead is more often expressed by the notion of *cultural* difference. Such ideologies seek to distance themselves from the now discredited eugenics of old but maintain that it is the culture, and not the genes as such, of Asians and blacks which make them incompatible with the 'British way of life'. The terms 'Asian' or 'black' and 'Britain' can thereby be constructed as mutually exclusive categories (Gilroy 1993). Henderson's (1995: 10) article, quite explicitly tried to conflate the biological (his paper was entitled 'Is it in the blood?') and culturalist arguments about the 'resentful and separatist mentality of the West-Indian-descended population in England'.

Racialism comprises the discriminatory *actions* taken as a result of racist beliefs.

Racism and the Individual

Stereotypes are commonly used to help us organise our thoughts and operate in everyday life. If combined with an intolerance of difference this may prejudice us against those from other groups. Despite the race relations acts and the best efforts of the Commission for Racial Equality and local authorities around the country, people still recognise a large degree of prejudice exists against Asian and black people (Jones 1992, Skellington 1996)

It is not always easy to distinguish what constitutes racist behaviour. It was clear from both this study and the earlier study of rugby league that people have very different ideas about what constitutes racism. As one of the black respondents observed, 'What we call racism is different from what someone else on the other side calls racism.' Moreover, if someone is attacked or denied an opportunity it is often not easy to establish whether that has anything to do with their colour. As we observed in our earlier report:

Some people try to justify racist abuse by likening it to other forms of abuse, say, in highlighting someone's lack, or length, of hair or their weight. However what this type of excuse fails to acknowledge is that all these terms of abuse can be levelled at anyone, regardless of their skin colour. Racist abuse is substantially different as it deliberately works to isolate a particular section of the community who have no redress and carries with it meanings that are far more violent and damaging to those on the receiving end than any light-hearted reference to someone's weight or hair length. Holland (1994) highlighted, with his study at football grounds, how black players receive not only racist abuse but also more abuse of *all* kinds from the fans; thus they suffer what he refers to as a 'double burden' of abuse.
(Long, *et al*, 1995, p4)

Commonsense Racism

Some stereotypes have been repeated so often that they are accepted as commonsense. Within the current context this applies most commonly to athletic ability in sport because of some presumed genetic inheritance, but can also extend to other characteristics. For example:

- * black people are naturally athletic
- * black people don't make good swimmers
- * black people are better sprinters than white people
- * black people are naturally predisposed to be fast bowlers
- * Asians are too frail for competitive sports
- * Asians are more likely to cheat
- * Asian batsmen are naturally 'wristy'
- * white people are more intelligent
- * white players are more disciplined

Some of these conventional wisdoms have eventually had to give way in the face of very obvious contradictory evidence in the sports arena. For example, it was not long ago that it was thought by some that black footballers were not good defenders because they lacked the necessary 'bottle'. However this was demonstrably refuted when Viv Anderson became the first black footballer to play for England as a defender in the late seventies. However, many racial stereotypes have proved extremely resilient despite research evidence to the contrary (e.g. Edwards 1973, Phillips 1976, Cashmore 1996).

Institutional Racism

We have previously suggested (Long *et al*, 1995) that most people are racist to a certain degree (in their stereotypical views rather than their actions), and observed that there is no reason to expect people from whichever ethnic group to be different in that. The point is that the positions of power in British society (and British sport and cricket), are dominated by white people. Not surprisingly, that leaves black people feeling that they have to be better than their white counterparts in order to succeed.

Banning athletes because of their colour (e.g. boxing in Britain and baseball in the United States) may be a thing of the past, but some racist attitudes are so pervasive that they are built into the structures of sport. Miles (1989, 1993) has followed others in labelling those processes which, whether intentionally or not, result in the continued exclusion of a subordinate group as institutional racism.

Racism in Sport

The Sports Council, many local authorities and National Governing Bodies of Sport have expressed their concern that there are not more people from ethnic minorities taking part in sport either as players or spectators. In reviewing the involvement of South Asian youths in sport, Fleming (1994) has argued that 'the preoccupation with cultural differences is a diversion and a distraction from **the** most fundamental issue - the pervasive impact of racism in all its guises.'

The work already mentioned by Holland (1994) established the disproportionate amount of abuse directed at black football players, black supporters and black people living near the grounds, and our report into the nature and extent of racism in professional rugby league also highlighted many examples of racial stereotyping and abuse directed at Asian and black players and spectators (Long *et al*, 1995).

As previously mentioned, cricket has been the site of racial antagonisms over the years and a number of well published incidents in cricket generally and in Yorkshire in particular have served to highlight these problems. Prominent black cricketers such as David Lawrence and Viv Richards have reported receiving racial abuse from some sections of Yorkshire supporters during the 1980s (see Marqusee 1995) and the recent test series against Pakistan was similarly marred by sections of the Western Terrace at Headingley shouting racial abuse at both Asian spectators and the Pakistani side (see Searle 1996).

As the great cricket writer C. L. R. James (1963: 58) wrote many years ago, ‘there was racialism in cricket, there is racialism in cricket, there will always be racialism in cricket. But there ought not to be’. While recent history supports James view that racism has been and continues to be a central, not peripheral, problem within the game of cricket, this is clearly abhorrent to many in the game, who do not want it always to be so. This report documents some of the incidents of racism within cricket but also provides, in the concluding section, an outline of some of the possible measures to eradicate racism so that cricket can truly live up to the high standards it sets for itself.

The Report

The rest of the report explains the research that we undertook (Chapter 2), then presents the findings from the survey of the club secretaries (Chapter 3), the interviews with players (Chapter 4) and the interviews with umpires (Chapter 5), before drawing conclusions which we hope will point possible ways forward.

CHAPTER 2: ASKING THE QUESTIONS

Getting Started

In this project we were not starting completely from scratch; we had addressed a similar set of issues in our research in rugby league and had the basis of a model to follow. Unlike in the earlier study though, we were not dealing here with the top level of the professional game and so decided not to survey the supporters. The three basic components of the project were:

- a) a postal questionnaire to club secretaries;
- b) interviews with players;
- c) group interviews with league umpires.

In addition we have observed at matches (local league games, the one day international and the test match at Headingley), monitored the national and cricket press and reviewed the academic literature on related issues. There were also informal interviews and discussions with spectators, former players and writers.

The quality of the data produced in a survey depends in large part on the quality of the questions asked. Racism is a sensitive issue and it is not easy to ask questions in such a way that people will feel encouraged to give a full and honest response. We found some officials were rather wary of us, which was in marked contrast to the openness of the players we approached. Throughout we tried to persuade our respondents that there were no right or wrong answers, but we recognise that there is normally a tendency for people to answer in a way that puts them closer to what they calculate the researchers' views to be. To encourage people to express their views freely, we thought it was important to guarantee anonymity so the views expressed in this report remain unattributed even though some respondents may feel cheated as a result of not being acknowledged.

The research did not start until the cricket season was already underway, which meant we had to operate to a very tight time schedule. This had consequences for the sequencing of work and the selection of fixtures at which interviews were conducted.

The Survey of Clubs

Combining our knowledge from the rugby league survey with a range of background reading, we drafted a questionnaire and sought reactions from club officials and other key individuals in the game. We then amended the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and conducted a postal survey by mailing it to secretaries of local league clubs, asking for their personal views (Table 1). The core of this survey was provided by the leagues in which Leeds clubs played. In addition we included two leagues in neighbouring Bradford, including the predominantly Asian Qaid e Azam League, two

leagues from the rather different environments of Humberside/East Yorkshire, and the Yorkshire League (chosen because of its status).

Table 1: The Survey of Clubs

League	Number of Clubs	Questionnaires returned
Airedale & Wharfedale	24	9
Barkston Ash	8	0
Central Yorkshire	29	12
Dales Council	26	3
Leeds and District	24	11
Wetherby and District	30	16
Wakefield and District	13	3
Bradford	26	13
West Riding	26	11
Qaid e Azam	19	4
Bradford Mutual	32	12
Humberside Federation	12	4
East Riding Amateur	41	9
Yorkshire	14	10
Total *	324	117

* N.B. the total number of questionnaires sent out was not quite the same as the sum of clubs in the 14 leagues because 2 clubs play in two leagues.

Using the address lists supplied by Yorkshire Cricket Association we were able to send questionnaires to 324 secretaries in the selected leagues. Prepaid reply envelopes were provided and with the help of Yorkshire County Cricket Club we were able to offer people an inducement to return their questionnaires (entry into a prize draw with the chance to win tickets for one of Yorkshire's matches).

The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter explaining why it was important that they should participate and stressing that it was their personal views we were interested in, so they need not try to give a 'club view'. After 4-5 weeks a reminder was sent (with another copy of the questionnaire and prepaid envelope) to those who did not respond. Finally, a thank you to those who had replied and an exhortation to the others was included in a YCA mailing to members.

From the 324 questionnaires sent out, 117 usable replies were returned by the cut-off date (a response rate of 36%). This is the kind of response rate that might be expected from a postal survey, but in view of the prominence given to these issues in recent months we were rather disappointed. In these circumstances, the nature of the non-respondents is important. If they are, to all intents and purposes, the same as those who replied their non-response is of little significance. However, there is cause for concern if those motivated to reply are systematically different in some way, thereby biasing the survey findings. For example, it may be that those who are most racist decided not to get involved, thereby leaving us with a rosy impression of cricket. On the other

hand, secretaries may have refused because they thought that the questionnaire itself was somehow racist, designed to emphasise difference (e.g. Q15 - see Appendix 2).

Several of the questions used matched those included in the survey of rugby league club officials, but others were designed specifically to address cricketing issues (Appendix 2). Before the questionnaires were finalised there was much discussion within the research team about the wording and coverage of the questions. We also sought the help of others involved in local cricket (administrators and club officials) to try to improve the questionnaire.

Interviews with Players

Three preliminary interviews were conducted with players to help to set the agenda. Thereafter, 35 interviews were conducted with both black (Asian and African-Caribbean) and white players (Table 2) from six leagues, many of whom had previously played in other leagues. With three exceptions these interviews were conducted at matches when players were not directly involved in the game.

Table 2: Racial composition of interview sample

White	Asian	African-Caribbean	Other
21	7	6	1

These interviews were much looser in their structure than the questionnaires, allowing interviewers to investigate in detail the points raised by each player. The main themes explored were:

- the respondents' own involvement in cricket;
- any perceived association between cricketing attributes and racial groups;
- reactions to a set of contentious issues¹;
- personal experiences of racism and suggestions about how things might be improved.

These were not addressed in a set order, but raised as appropriate in the course of the conversation. Some of the topics were the same as those put to club secretaries, but because of the nature of the interviews, players were able to develop their responses more fully. Typically these interviews lasted 20-40 minutes.

In such interviews the kind of response depends on the relationship that is established between the interviewer and player. Naturally we tried to make our respondents feel comfortable talking to us, but it seems likely that some players may give a different emphasis to what they say depending upon whether the interviewer is white or black. In our team there were three white and one black interviewer, but because of the logistics of travelling to games it was not possible to arrange a match between interviewer and respondent.

¹ (a) Whether there should be overseas players in the local leagues. (b) Why there are no ethnic minority players in the Yorkshire side. (c) Whether minority ethnic groups living in Britain should support the English cricket team. (d) Whether being from an ethnic minority prevented people realising their full potential when playing for England.

All the interviews were tape recorded to make it easier to run the interviews and to aid our analysis later. As we assured all our respondents that what we were told would be treated in confidence, we have used pseudonyms for reporting their views in Chapter 4.

Interviews with Umpires

While we were doing our study of rugby league we became aware that we had left out an important source of interviews; the match officials are in the thick of the action and travel from club to club. As a result, in this study we decided to get the views of umpires. To do this we set-up two group discussions (also known as group interviews or focus groups) and recruited umpires from four of the local leagues. This resulted in two groups of six. We used a similar agenda to the one used when interviewing players, but the interviewing process was very different. Unlike the one to one relationship between the interviewers and the players, on these occasions we tried to encourage discussion between the various umpires. Once again we tape-recorded what was said, but guaranteed that individuals would not be identified. These group discussions lasted approximately one and a half hours each.

Analysis of Data

The results from the survey of club secretaries were all coded and then entered into a computer statistical package (SPSS) for analysis. This allowed us to compare results from the different sub-groups, but because of the size of the sample we have only drawn attention in Chapter 3 to only the most significant differences. Some of the more open questions did not lend themselves to such analysis and were therefore analysed in a more qualitative manner.

The data from the semi-structured in-depth interviews with players and umpires were reviewed by the research team to try to identify common themes and explore any apparent differences between white and black respondents. Discussion between the different members of the team helped us to work out the patterns coming from the different interviews. In the interpretations we offer in Chapters 4 and 5, we have used direct quotes to illustrate these points.

CHAPTER 3: THE VIEW FROM THE PAVILION CLUB SECRETARIES

The Respondents and Their Clubs

Two thirds of those who replied had played cricket themselves at league or county level, though whether or not they had played made no significant difference to their responses. Most had been involved in cricket for a long time, over half for more than 25 years. As a consequence it was not surprising that over half were aged 45 or more. Equally it was not surprising that respondents were predominantly male (only 3 women). Only seven per cent indicated that they came from an Asian background and none said they were African-Caribbean (though there may have been some among those who did not answer this question).

Two out of every five respondents (41%) indicated that none of their senior players were from minority ethnic backgrounds, while ten per cent had over half. The position for junior players was very similar (45% with none and 9% with over half). Less than one in five had any committee members from minority ethnic groups. Only just over a third said they retained an overseas player (for 19% these came from Australasia, 12% from Asia and 3% from each of South Africa and the West Indies respectively). Although 21 per cent felt that overseas players had a negative impact on local league cricket (see Table 3), they were heavily outnumbered by those who disagreed (52%). Opinion was much more evenly divided on whether or not professional players should be allowed; 44% thought they should be outlawed (a defence of the spirit of amateurism). Of course these two issues overlap as many of the professional players are from overseas. Some comments heard at matches also suggested that some of the antipathy towards overseas players was not a matter of race, but that they were seen to be 'in it for the money', which implied an inappropriate approach to the game ('it should be played for the love of it'). On the other hand there were very few who felt that people should only be able to play for the side if they were born locally.

Table 3: Responses to Statements About the Game

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Percentage of responses to each statement</i>					
'Overseas players are having a negative impact on league cricket in Yorkshire.'	6	15	27	38	14
'Professional players should not be allowed to play in local leagues.'	18	26	12	34	10
'Players should only be allowed to play for their local side if they have been born in that area.'	1	3	6	48	42
'It is easier to run a team entirely from one ethnic group.'	2	11	28	44	15
'Ethnic minority players get picked on at some clubs.'	3	20	43	28	6
'There are never any racist remarks from our team and supporters.'	16	34	20	26	4
'Too much is made of this black/white thing - in cricket they're all the same.'	36	43	13	5	3

While only two respondents were prepared to suggest that winning was everything at their club, the overall balance lay with those who saw winning as more important (48%), rather than socialising (18%) - see Table 4. We then examined whether or not this made any difference to the kinds of response the secretaries gave to the other questions. Not surprisingly, those that emphasised the social were rather less likely to retain an overseas player. Perhaps more surprisingly, those who emphasised winning were less accepting of sledging and racial abuse. Almost all those from clubs where winning was most important disagreed with the proposition that ethnic minority players are unable to fulfil their potential for England, while the 'social' clubs were more likely to think that people from minority ethnic groups should support England.

Table 4: Winning or Socialising						
Winning is everything	Evenly balanced					The social side is most important
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Percentage of respondents</i>						
2	14	34	33	7	7	4

It must, of course, be remembered that this is a profile of our sample rather than a representation of all secretaries and their clubs in Yorkshire and Humberside (or even the area around Leeds), first because of the way in which we selected the clubs to receive a questionnaire and secondly because of the possible differences between those who chose to respond and those who did not.

Attributes of Players

In the light of popular stereotypes of players from different backgrounds (West Indian fast bowlers, wristy Indian batsmen, etc.), club secretaries were asked if they thought there were any special characteristics of ethnic minority players (asking specifically about Asian players and African-Caribbean players) that suited them to playing cricket and to certain cricketing roles, or limited them in their playing.

Despite those popular stereotypes rather fewer respondents in this study than in our rugby league study attributed such characteristics to Asian or African-Caribbean players. Some twenty per cent thought they could identify special characteristics that suited both Asian and African-Caribbean players to cricket (Table 5). That was twice as many as perceived limitations in Asian players, and hardly any perceived limitations in players because they were African-Caribbean.

Table 5: Perceived Attributes of Ethnic Minority Players

Special Characteristics	Asians	African-Caribbeans
	<i>Percentage of officials</i>	
Suited to cricket	20	22
Limiting in cricket	10	2
Suited to certain roles	5	8

When asked to suggest what these special attributes were, secretaries gave responses that could be classified into three main groups:

- Physical characteristics
- Mental characteristics
- Socio-cultural characteristics

No single physical attribute was highlighted for Asians. Rather, those that commented suggested they possess a high degree of general physical ability, applicable to the majority of skills involved in cricket. It was further suggested that this benefits learning and development. The physical attributes associated with African-Caribbeans were strength, size and suppleness; their physique and athleticism was thought to be responsible for the dynamic nature of their game (e.g. fast reflexes, powerful batting, fast bowling and agile fielding). No negative physical attributes were associated with either ethnic minority.

Both Asians and African-Caribbeans were thought to have good temperaments and a large amount of enthusiasm, arising from their love of cricket. Additionally, the perceived relaxed nature of African-Caribbeans was highlighted as being beneficial to a good mental attitude. However, some suggested that both ethnic groups lack a degree of discipline in their approach to the game.

Cricket was strongly associated with both Asian and African-Caribbean cultures. These traditions were thought to be positive social characteristics influencing involvement in cricket from a young age. However, some suggested that Asians in particular found it difficult to integrate within a predominantly white team structure. A number of respondents termed this 'social adaptability'. It was suggested that this might stem from religious beliefs and/or family commitments and might compromise their loyalty to the team.

It should be pointed out that many respondents refused to answer this section on principle because they questioned the relevance of such questions, suggesting that special attributes associated with cricket were completely divorced from ethnic origin.

Racism in Cricket

In recent years 'sledging' (the deliberate use of comments designed to distract a player and put them off their game) has become more common in cricket. As many as forty per cent thought that sledging was acceptable as just part of the game or sometimes acceptable (Table 6). Rather fewer thought this about abuse received by players because of the colour of their skin; 12 per cent said this was acceptable or sometimes acceptable (very similar to the 13% of rugby league fans who responded in this way to the same question).

Table 6: Acceptability of Sledging and Racial Abuse

Acceptability	Sledging	Abuse for skin colour
	<i>Percentage of club secretaries</i>	
Acceptable/just part of the game	14	7
Sometimes acceptable	26	5
Never acceptable	60	88

Although only 10 per cent said racism was non-existent, three quarters thought there was only a small amount (Table 7). Perhaps surprisingly, respondents were more likely to think that racism was less extensive in county cricket than in their own surroundings in local league cricket (22%:14%, the rest thinking it the same or not knowing).

Table 7: Extent of Racism in Local Cricket

Extent	<i>Percentage of responses</i>
Non-existent	10
Small amount	77
Considerable amount	11
Throughout	2

Half the club secretaries maintained that there were never any racist remarks from their own team or supporters (Table 3), though 30 per cent recognised that this was not so. Our previous work has suggested that people are more likely to recognise racism at a distance than in their own back yard (Long, Carrington and Spracklen, 1996). However, when asked if ethnic minority players got picked on at some clubs only 23 per cent were of the view that this happened.

Overall, a large majority (more than three quarters) agreed with the statement that 'too much is made of this black/white thing - in cricket they're all the same' (Table 3).

Action, Integration and Separation

Just over a third (35%) indicated that their club made efforts to encourage black and ethnic minority players. However, when asked what specific actions were taken, the most common response was that the club was open to all; although clearly helpful, this does not really constitute direct action.

Where more positive steps were being taken, the most common approach was to work at the junior level and through the schools. Others mentioned active recruitment policies on a local level.

As one of the most significant steps to try to create opportunities for involvement in cricket has been the establishment of new, predominantly Asian leagues, we asked whether respondents thought these were conducive to the development of cricket. The vast majority were not supportive of such initiatives; only 14% were in favour. The most common reason for arriving at this conclusion was a feeling that segregation is intrinsically bad and that it may itself encourage racism (Table 8). Some also felt that it inhibited player progression. Among those who saw advantages in such leagues there was a recognition that some may want to play with people from their own culture or nationality, free from the fear of racism. There was also the suggestion that it is better to play cricket than not, and such leagues increased the opportunities to play. All club secretaries who said they were Asian thought that such leagues did help cricket development.

While 12 per cent thought that team management was easier if all players were from the same ethnic background many more (60%) disagreed (Table 8).

Table 8: Reasons Why All Asian Leagues Are Bad/Good	
Reason *	Per cent of respondents
Segregation is bad	30
Encourages racism	13
Believe in equal treatment for all	11
Inhibits player progression	10
Other (bad)	4
Other (good)	12
No response	20
TOTAL	100
*Only reasons given by at least 5% of respondents are included separately	

We asked club secretaries for their responses to three statements relating to recent talking points in the game around the ideas of belonging and integration (see Table 9).

Table 9: Reactions to Recent Talking Points					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	<i>Percentage of responses to each statement</i>				
'Yorkshire CCC was right to abandon its Yorkshire only policy.'	24	43	9	20	4
'Asian and black people living in England should support the England Cricket Team.'	11	27	33	24	5
'Given their ethnic origin, Asian and black players are unable to perform to their full potential when playing for England.'	1	3	9	47	40

Until recently Yorkshire (the county cricket club) was renowned for maintaining a policy that allowed only those born in Yorkshire to play in the side. Two thirds of our respondents thought they were right to abandon that policy, but a quarter still think the decision was wrong (see Table 9).

Although opinion was divided, there was a slight balance in agreement with the proposition that Asian and black people living in England should support the England cricket team. However, there was hardly any support (only 4% agreeing) for the argument that Asian and black cricketers might find it difficult to perform to their full potential if playing for England.

Unlike in the rugby league study, the majority of these club officials (79%) had heard of the Let's Kick Racism Out of Football campaign. However, they were unsure of whether a similar campaign would be useful in cricket at the county/national level. Although the balance was slightly in favour, they were almost evenly divided between yes, no and don't know.

Views of Asian Respondents

Although there were few respondents from Asian backgrounds (only 8), we examined whether there were any marked differences in their responses. Interestingly the Asian secretaries did not have significantly different views about racial characteristics suited to cricket. However, in marked contrast to the white respondents they felt (with only one exception) that all-Asian cricket leagues contributed to the development of the game. They were more likely to think that ethnic minority players get picked on at some clubs and they thought racism was more pervasive in the game than their white counterparts did. They were also more likely to disagree with the suggestion that people from minority ethnic groups should support the England team, though not all did. They were more supportive of the inclusion of overseas players in the local leagues, all thought that Yorkshire was right to drop its 'born in Yorkshire' policy and all disagreed with the proposition that Asian and black cricketers are unable to perform to their full potential when playing for England.

Age Variations

To examine whether the age of the respondent made a difference to the responses we divided the sample approximately in half, into those aged under 45 and those aged 45 and above. Although this did reveal some variations, these were not normally statistically significant.

The younger group were more likely to recognise various forms of racism and were less likely to think that overseas players have a negative impact on the leagues. They were also more likely to agree that YCCC had been right to drop the 'Yorkshire only' policy and were less likely to believe that people from minority ethnic groups should support England.

On the other hand, the older group were less accepting of sledging. They were more strongly opposed to all-Asian leagues as a way of developing cricket and were less likely to think an equivalent to the Let's Kick Racism Out of Football campaign would be a good idea.

CHAPTER 4: THE VIEW FROM THE SQUARE PLAYERS

This chapter is based on in-depth interviews with 14 players from minority ethnic groups (seven Asian and six black) and 21 white players. Each issue is discussed first from the perspective of the Asian and black players and then compared with the response from the white players.

Experiences of racism

Nearly all the Asian and black players had experienced racism of one sort or another during their cricketing careers. Even those who at first responded that they had not experienced any racism later recounted experiences that suggested otherwise. This would seem to suggest that for many the experience of racism had become so common as to be an almost unacknowledged part of their life, or that a sense of loyalty to cricket made them initially reticent. Most of the cricketers felt that the racism that did exist in cricket, rather than being overt was often expressed in more subtle, and sometimes covert ways. As one black player said:

"Oh, I've seen it [racism] on the pitch. It may not always be right there in front of you but you know it's just lurking round the corner, you can tell by some people's attitude...There's not many people that come up to you and say they don't like you because of your colour or whatever. But you'll hear it going on behind your back".

Similarly an Asian player remarked:

"In cricket I have never experienced any direct racism. It is not like football where people tend to come up and say it to your face. It is more indirect, you come up against barriers all the time. You also tend to get ignored if you do not move in the right social circles, exclusive to the white players in clubs".

However a number of players also recounted experiences of direct and overt racial abuse from opponents. One Asian player, when asked whether he had ever received any overt racial abuse, responded:

"Yes, I have. The worst was when I made a big score. One of [...] players came up to me during my innings and said 'Get out you black bastard'. The umpire heard it and did nothing. I told my captain at the end of the match and he approached the individual and asked him to apologise, which he did. It made me feel horrible and very angry, and in a sense spoilt my achievement".

Another player also recounted an experience of racism from a team-mate when he joined an 'all-white' side in the Bradford league:

"One time I was in the dressing room and, you know, the team just talks and one of them was talking about another team and all I heard was, 'Oh, that nigger's sharp'. And once I heard that it just put me off. I just walked out of the room and later on the guy came up to me and apologised to me, and said 'I'll show you that I'm not racist, blah, blah, blah'. At the end of the day he couldn't prove that to me. I still believe he is a racist".

Although most of the players denied that match officials were racially biased, putting poor decisions down to general incompetence, one Asian and one black player stated that they felt some umpires were racially biased in favour of whites, especially when 'all-white' teams were playing predominantly 'all-black' or 'all-Asian' sides. This was seen as resulting in unfair decisions being given against Asian or black sides. One black player when asked where the racism stemmed from answered:

"Most of it, which you get in most sports, is from people in charge of the game, like the umpires. Constantly they make it plain that the decisions that they do, they're after you. At the end of the day it's the officials who give decisions so you do get upset because you feel you're not getting a fair deal. Nobody likes to lose but I'd rather lose knowing I had a fair crack of the whip without being cheated".

Generally, most white players had experienced few examples, if any, of clear racism on the field of play. But there were some who were aware of occasional incidents - for example

"You get the odd idiot who shouts the odds..."

"It's happened on odd occasions in this league and I think it's appalling".

"I've played in games where something's been said.".

"The people I mainly spend my time with it's not a great issue, but for some people it's just what they're used to...just attitudes they think it's quite normal to have, so you hear it. It's never to their faces".

Where these had occurred, the feeling was that this was often due to the player/s getting caught up in the passion of competitive play, and were therefore much more about "winding up" the opposition. Players raised the issue time and again that the traditions of cricket seem to protect it from the worst kinds of behaviour seen in other sports. One respondent observed that although he had never witnessed racism in open age cricket he had sometimes come across it among the juniors before they had become inculcated with the spirit of cricket. There was general agreement that where they occurred racist views and comments presented more of a problem off the field, pre-match or post-match. One player commented on this directly:

"In the actual performance of playing I have never experienced any racism at all I've never heard any in the matches that I've participated in. I have seen racist language though and racist attitudes emanating from off the game, or pre-match and post-match".

Another issue raised by several interviewees was that players seem to get upset at times when Asian players speak in their own language during matches. This is perceived by some as being a deliberate attempt to emphasise differences and raise the temperature. Interestingly, some respondents claimed that this was an important factor in creating a racist climate at matches against Asian, or predominantly Asian teams, although they stressed that they personally were un-affected by this. For example, one player expressed the situation like this:

"My experience is that Asians particularly do not mix. This leads to "clubs within clubs" which is not good. Even if you are an Orthodox Muslim who cannot drink it does not stop you coming to the pub after the match. I have seen other players get annoyed at Asians speaking in their own native tongue during the match. This does not annoy me, it is after all their language".

Racial characteristics

In general the Asian and black players rejected any assertion that there were any inherent playing characteristics associated with different racial groups. Where broad generalisations were made these were often put down to environmental factors like playing on different wickets in different parts of the world. In the few cases where cricketing attributes associated with race were mentioned these ranged from general pronouncements on cricketing ability, 'Asians are simply the best all-round cricket players' as one respondent said, to more specific arguments like this one suggested by an Asian player when asked whether there were any racial differences in playing cricket:

"Yeah, a big difference. I think West Indians and Asian people play the game more freer. English people play in a totally different way. That's one reason why they can never compete with us because they're not flamboyant or anything. They're a good team but have nothing special".

An interesting difference emerged with responses to this area of questioning. White players living in East Yorkshire were quite clear that there are differences between the way Asian, black and white players play the game and that these were likely to be due to environmental factors, role models and inherited, physically based differences. For example one East Yorkshire white player offered:

"The West Indians are often fast bowlers and they seem to have tall builds, they appear quite elastic. They seem fitter and more powerful than tall English players. Mentally, English players handle pressure better but they are not so naturally talented and are less physical".

The overall impression was that East Yorkshire players believed that stereotypes, such as solid, ponderous, cautious English cricketers, flashy, wristy Asians, and explosive, powerful and athletic black players, reflected more than an element of truth, and was a self evident non-issue. In terms of identifying the reasons, these white players tended to include inherited physiological and anatomical reasons, but stressed that pitches, culture and traditions were of equal or even greater importance.

In contrast white players from West Yorkshire were much less convinced that there were differences between the racial groups in terms of playing characteristics. The major issues raised tended to focus on style, motivation towards the competitive aspect of the game, and the relative importance of group or team cohesiveness. In terms of explaining these differences, emphasis was placed upon tradition and general environmental factors. Few respondents focused on inherited or physiologically based explanations, and interestingly, most seemed content to answer the question rather briefly or with a much broader type of response. Very few mentioned the influence of racial characteristics on specific skills such as batting, bowling or fielding (this was in stark contrast to respondents in East Yorkshire). One player summed up the position when asked if the different racial groups possess particular playing characteristics and attributes:

" No not all. Perhaps you associate Caribbean players with quick fast bowlers, but that is it".

Controversies

All the Asian and black players, except for one, felt that **overseas players** were beneficial to the game and should be encouraged. The one player who felt that overseas players were a hindrance to the game said, 'No I don't think they should be allowed. You should play the people from the area - give them a chance'. A more typical response, however, came from one black player who said:

"I'm all for them. At the end of the day they improve your game, they give the rest of the team a boost. Depending on what type of structures you build them into in your team you can get them to help you in your training, even the youngsters can benefit from that".

The vast majority of white players also felt that the involvement of overseas players in local cricket was a good thing. Most striking was the frequently made assertion that these players helped raise standards and improved the competitive nature of the game. A number of respondents stressed that anything likely to raise the profile of the sport was to be welcomed, and that where overseas players were involved in coaching and youth development with the clubs or in the area benefits could accrue throughout the sports development continuum.

"... it brings professionalism to our game. It also gives us a chance to improve our own game".

"If overseas players are interested in coming then the standard of the game will be raised. There are not enough local people interested in playing so more players from anywhere is the key".

We also asked players why they thought there were no Asians and blacks **playing for Yorkshire**. The general consensus among Asian and black players was that Yorkshire County Cricket Club had not done enough to encourage the development of cricketers from minority ethnic groups, and that there had been and still was a racial problem that prevented young Asian and black cricketers from playing for Yorkshire. Most of the interviewees were able to recount personal stories of exclusion that supported their belief that Yorkshire favoured white players above Asian or black players. One of the reasons suggested for the lack of Asian and black players at Yorkshire County Cricket Club was the 'all-white' environment which was perceived to be unwelcoming to Asian and black people. This was felt to apply to both local clubs, and by extension, the County club. As one Asian player suggested:

"It's very difficult for an Asian or a West Indian lad, unless he's got a few mates with him, to go down to an all-white club. He's got to be really serious about playing to go and take the shit so a lot of Asian lads will just not do it".

This feeling of social exclusion from Yorkshire was reinforced by another young black cricketer who retold his experiences of playing junior cricket at Yorkshire.

"I played for Yorkshire when I was 16 and I can see exactly why there's no [Asian or black players] there 'cause I didn't fit in at all. I felt like a complete outsider. I played for about two seasons and I hated it, I really hated it. It's hard to explain, but you feel like you're on a lower level. I wanted to play cricket at a high level and that put me off completely".

Apart from these more institutionalised barriers many players felt that racist practices meant that Asian and black players were actively overlooked by Yorkshire County Cricket Club and that an Asian or black player had to meet higher standards than white players to be given a chance. In this regard one Asian player remarked:

"The Asian or West Indian lad has to be twice as good as the English lad, so if he's unbelievably talented, then fair enough, but if he's the same as an English lad the chances are that he'll be left behind and the English lad will be given the chance".

One player had more direct experience from when he had gone along for the Yorkshire cricket trials, and highlighted the negative effects such discrimination has on individuals and its wider consequences:

"I went for their trials, along with three other Asians. Not one of us were selected for the Yorkshire training camp, even though I knew we were good enough. This is the problem in Yorkshire. There are a lot of very talented Asian players out there but they are often passed over for white players. The formation of the Asian leagues were simply an act of desperation not an attempt at segregation, because we simply are not getting the opportunity which we deserve".

The responses of white players tended to emphasise that Yorkshire have still not done enough to facilitate the inclusion of players from minority ethnic groups, and although less prevalent a view, several white players felt that there was still a considerable amount of racist feeling and sentiment at committee level and in much of the Y.C.C.C. set-up. Less frequent, but offered nevertheless, was the view that players from racial minority groups had not “made it” because they were simply not good enough.

An important theme in the responses was that more development needs to be done at all levels of the game to overcome this problem. One white player expressed this in the following way:

“I find it amazing. There is lots of talent out there which unfortunately is not being developed. Perhaps the problem is in the schools where the emphasis is on football or rugby”.

On the question of whether Asian and blacks who were **playing for England** would give their all and **play to their full potential**, there was near unanimous agreement that such players would give ‘100 %’ to England. If being Asian or black did mean anything at all while playing Test cricket, most felt that, contrary to Henderson, this would manifest itself in an extra determination to succeed in the face of white racism within society and the desire to prove oneself against other Asian and black players. Asked whether Henderson’s suggestion was accurate one black player said:

*“Well I think that’s absolute rubbish myself! At the end of the day your likes of Devon Malcolm, Philip Defraitas, I don’t believe there’s any other players on that pitch, white players, who are any more prouder putting on an England shirt than what they are. You know for a black player in this white community, you’ve **done** something, you’ve achieved something, and you want to go out there and show people that I’m on this team on merit”.*

Many Asian and black cricketers also saw no contradiction between national identifications for other countries and commitment to England. Asked whether Henderson was correct in questioning the commitment of England’s Asian and black cricketers one player responded:

“No, I really don’t think so. If they get selected they’re going to try their hearts out - they’ll want to prove themselves and justify their selection - they’re professionals, but it would apply to anyone. If I was honest and I had the opportunity, I’d rather play for Pakistan, but If I got selected for England I’d be trying 100% so I could be proud of myself, and my family and my friends would be too”.

White players' views were also fairly consistent in the belief that, at the top level, players will always do their best for themselves as professionals, and for their family and community. While some players expressed that they could not see how or why black and Asian players should love England in the same way as an indigenous Anglo-Saxon English player, very few doubted that this would have much bearing on their actual performance. One respondent accepted that having mixed identities was difficult for him to understand, and that the more important issue related to the motivation and commitment of individual players.

"Asians and blacks from here playing for England can only be a good thing. Chris Lewis is so talented but he never seems to do anything with it. He is so laid back which seems to be his cultural approach. I'm sure that he'd play the same for the West Indies".

"I'm sure that most Black and Asian players playing for England would do the business if they are sure that it's England they really want to play for. That's the important bit for me - do you really want to play for England? My view is that everyone born here is English and therefore I would expect that they would want to play for England".

At the same time, however, there was a total rejection of the suggestion that Asian and black people should in any way be required to **support the England cricket team** else they be considered in some way disloyal British subjects. Most argued that it was a matter of free choice which was the same as people's footballing affiliations. Many of the Asian and black players also argued that questions about Asians and blacks playing for England were separate from the right of Asian and black communities to support the Test sides from their countries of origin and that the two questions should not be confused. This response, to the 'Tebbit Test', from an Asian player was typical of those interviewed:

*"I think that's a load of rubbish. There's a difference between playing for your country and supporting a country. That's two different things...I can't understand that statement. It's a free country, you can support who you want, if you want to support England you can support England. I can never imagine it being the other way around where the English people are living in India or living in the West Indies and when England come to play they're going to say 'We're West Indian', I don't think they would do that so why do they expect us to do that? There again I'm sure if one of them played for the West Indies he'd **play** for the West Indies".*

From the interviews there appeared to be little difference, in relation to which team people supported, between those who were born in England and those born outside the UK. For example one player, when asked whether he would support the England test side, replied,

"NO! I support Pakistan. Even though I was born here, I still associate with Pakistan. You can't expect people to do otherwise - it's where their roots are".

The overwhelming majority of white players too pursued the argument that 'who you support is your own affair'. While some suggested that they found the idea difficult, they agreed that they could understand why black and Asian players and the communities from which they came often supported countries other than England. For two respondents though this example of mixed loyalties was seen as unacceptable, but the following line of thought was more typical of most white players:

"Even if they are born here, they should not necessarily support England. You support who you want to support. It doesn't matter where you are born, your own identity determines who you should support - it's a personal decision".

Another white player stressed the importance of cultural influence and traditional ties:

"If you come and you're born in England and you have a big family, lets say, and then they're going to stick together. And say Pakistan come over to England, basically they want to watch Pakistan play, even though they're living in England. They've still got their traditions that they want to see".

Ways forward

The majority view from the Asian and black players was that Yorkshire was failing to offer genuinely equal cricketing opportunities to all and that much talent was being wasted, which affected both the individuals concerned and Yorkshire itself as a cricket club. It was felt by some players that Asian and black people had to be included in the very decision making structures of Yorkshire and not just relegated to peripheral and marginal positions within YCCC. Only this could ensure that racist decision making processes were not being continued and would help to change the perception of YCCC as being an 'all-white environment' that was hostile to young Asian and black cricketers. Such steps would also help to reduce the extent to which racial stereotypes still influenced decisions at Yorkshire.

"The managing directors, the actual owners, the people that are in charge of these large establishments need to wake up and need to start putting [Asian and black] people into these top jobs because if they don't we're going to be as we are for the next 10 or 20 years....It's time these people started disregarding colour and stereotyping because that's one of the biggest problems we have. The fact that we tend to see black people as thick but brilliant at sports".

As the above quote suggests many of the players felt that the attitudes held in society as a whole were reflected in how people saw Asian and black cricketers and that this was denying many the opportunity to play cricket to the level that their potential allowed. One Asian player said, 'Changes need to be made in society first before these will filter down into other areas. Judgements should be made on ability rather than race in all aspects of society'. Also it was generally felt that there is a significant amount of Asian and black cricketing talent in Yorkshire going unnoticed by the cricketing authorities which would only be tapped once the cricketing authorities acknowledged that a problem existed. The lack of focused development was also highlighted with the suggestion that much of the sports development went into already established areas which were largely middle-class and white, thus missing out those communities which could really benefit from such development. As one Asian player noted:

"There is so much talent out there in the Asian community and none of it is being developed. You only stand a chance if you are outstanding. Players should be spotted and taken on at 16, it is no good after this. Players need to feel they are developing at this stage. If not they feel they are being 'fobbed off' and will soon lose interest. I do not think Yorkshire County Cricket Club has done anywhere near enough to bridge this gap. Saying that, Asian communities should also do more in terms of developing the local talent. The

Asian leagues are a step in this direction. I think there needs to be awareness on both sides of the community. It is a joint responsibility".

From the interviews it was clear that many Asian and black players felt they had been unfairly treated. Despite these personal setbacks, and more often because of them, many felt the development of better cricketing opportunities was important. It was not clear though whether all-Asian leagues, such as the Qaid e Azam, furthered ultimate 'integration' or were a regrettable, but in the present climate necessary, measure in the face of mainstream rejection of Asian and black players. What was clear was the personal cost that could result from people feeling they had been unfairly treated because of the colour of their skin. Many of these issues were reflected in the response from one player who said:

"I would develop a policy to develop the talent that abounds in this area. I would have trials for young Asians, run through our community centres. This talent could then be developed in the Asian leagues. This would lead to better players and more Asians feeling involved in the game, enjoying playing it. I do not enjoy playing cricket anymore. Because I was passed over unfairly and there is no way I can really make it. I feel bitter, frustrated and disillusioned with cricket. I play now simply out of habit, not enjoyment".

White players felt that the most important issue to improve matters was to develop more opportunities for all, and especially black and Asian players at performance and excellence levels. Little mention was made of campaigns or political and organisational support to raise the issues.

The general theme running throughout the responses of white players was that cricket was in much better shape than many other areas of sport or life in general in terms of racism, and that this was because players were all united in their love of the game. In addition, much was made of the traditional ethos and virtues of the game, such as fair play, and playing to the rules and the spirit of the game - it was felt that this aspect helped to protect cricket from much of the divisive and racially motivated problems faced elsewhere in society.

"The culture of cricket is a mirror of life in general the more we talk the more likely we are going to increase frustration and make things worse. The only real way is to get on with it".

More specifically, the desirability of working to develop the game in schools, clubs and all communities was raised:

"Schools are a vital ingredient in turning things around via the promotion of a multi-cultural curriculum which includes sport."

"The main problem is school cricket and increasing opportunities for all players, black and white together".

CHAPTER 5: THE VIEW FROM THE STUMPS - UMPIRES

Overall the umpires were older than the players and the club secretaries. Collectively they had scores of years of experience of cricket as players and umpires across a number of different leagues. There was only one black umpire involved in the focus groups.

Racial Characteristics

The umpires were more ready than the club secretaries and players to ascribe racial differences, though these related more to attitude and orientation than to technical abilities. Both groups of umpires were concerned at the attitude they saw Asian sides bringing to the game:

"...and the worst by far are the Muslims and they are very, very aggressive to the umpires, to the players - and the spectators are even worse - pure aggression in the way they play the game".

Some also recognised the aggression of West Indian players, but this was seen to be mixed with a more cavalier style of play:

"The Caribbeans are aggressive, but in the right spirit. Sometimes I think it would be better if some of it rubbed off on the white coloured teams - some of them are too laid back".

These attitudes reflect something of a role reversal from the more common impressions of the meekness of the Asian, the cavalier attitude ascribed to West Indian players and the dogged resistance of the English. There was a suggestion that there seems to be a superiority complex among black players, while Asian players have an inferiority complex. The contention was that this could be seen from the way they played the game - the black players are, or were (see below), exuberant and full of flair, really enjoying it and going all out. Asian players were seen as being more cautious and prepared to do anything to win.

There was considerable resentment that Asian players often mutter in their own language (and African-Caribbeans in dialect) between themselves during the match - 'they carry on in their own lingo'. This was seen to be unfair and had the effect of 'winding up' the opposition because they could not understand what was being said. Umpires also claimed that it made it difficult for them to communicate properly with Asian teams to explain what they thought should be happening. There were also several observations about players with chips on their shoulders because of their colour. A black umpire saw it in rather different terms as an opportunity for black players to prove the point that they are as good as whites and so go out to win at all costs.

Some distinctions were also made in terms of physical and technical abilities.

"I think the West Indians are flamboyant. The Caribbean game this season was wonderful - the fielding was out of this world - they caught everything above the ground."

"The Caribbeans have such a good eye."

"And when they're batting they do something the English players have forgotten - they use their feet."

"The West Indians are natural athletes - more athletically built".

One umpire reminded us that our impression of the quality of Asian and black players is influenced by the overseas players.

"Don't forget the people we come in contact with are people who have come here because they are good. A person born of same skin colour in this country might be playing just as a run of the mill player - and I don't mean that disrespectfully, but they haven't come to this country because they are an outstanding player".

This was linked to a recognition of changes in the game played by cricketers from Asian and African-Caribbean backgrounds. Most have now been born and brought up here and have experienced the same environmental conditions (light, temperature, atmosphere and wickets) as the white English players. Having been brought-up on 'English wickets', and with the increasing significance of money in the game, players were seen to be becoming more 'English', prepared to grind out a win. They thought that players, from whichever group, were typically more competitive, aggressive and determined to win.

Although not always expressed in the most sensitive or complimentary terms, there was an appreciation of diversity within black groups. Some commented separately on Indians and Pakistanis, distinguished between Sikhs and Hindus and recognised the class dimension associated with caste or in reference to the quieter style of the businessmen of Khalsa. Some individual and sides were also singled out as 'lovely lads'.

Racism

Sledging was recognised as being widespread (and disapproved of), but something that happens irrespective of colour. The overall assessment was that there is not a lot of 'racial trouble': 'Not on the field, no - a few name callings...' Nevertheless, umpires were still able to cite particular incidents.

"In 8 years I've never seen any racial discrimination as such.."

"The odd individual."

"I think you probably do."

"I've heard them through the dressing room wall. "Oh we have to beat them blackies up there. We can't let them beat us." So it really puts your back up."

"There was a fight after one of the games and when we umpired the return match, even though the club had left the troublemakers out of the team it was still tense with a lot of banter. But you get the same between two all white teams".

As suggested by that last quote, the umpires were adamant that abuse and tension were not just a black/white thing.

"You ought to hear what Indians say about Pakistanis."

"I've never come across it between coloureds and whites...., but in that _____ League you do find it more when different creeds of coloureds are playing each other...There's more of it like when West Indians are playing Pakistanis."

"I'm sure it happens between two white teams as well".

Equally the criticism of players' attitude was extended to the Australians who were seen as being well practised in sledging and keen to win at all costs. Similarly, the chips were not just seen to be on the shoulders of black players.

"There's New Rover and they're all Jewish [reportedly now 'open']. I've stood for their matches a number of times and I'd say there's nearly always some friction between them and the other sides - it's because they've got a chip on their shoulders. They think everyone's against them because they're Jewish".

We asked umpires if they had ever been accused of being biased. They insisted that while they knew that players forever thought that the umpires were wrong, no one had accused them of being biased.

"You get accused of being wrong, but they'll buy you a drink after".

However, a black umpire light-heartedly observed:

"I get accused of being one of them, but it's by black players. I get more hassle from my own than from whites".

The umpires recognised that they had a duty to deal with any racial tension or abuse, 'showing them who's boss', but preferably pre-empting any trouble by laying down a strong line from the start of the match. They were critical of colleagues who were sometimes not strong enough and could not be bothered to report an incident. They respected a black umpire who had stuck to his guns in the face of bad behaviour by black players; the umpires' union has to stick together for the good of the game. They felt that most incidents would be dealt with by the captains if problems were drawn to their attention, but if that did not work a joint report from the two umpires would be backed to the hilt by the league.

They agreed that there is a certain amount of tension in the game now, but that this is not a consequence of racial friction: money, the constant talking in the game (thought to be imported from American sport or soccer), psyching-up and psyching-out, and the practice of sledging (imported from Australia) were all recognised as having contributed to a change in the spirit of the game. Sledging was not identified as being of a racial nature (other than on rare occasions), but it was recognised that it might fuel racial conflict.

"Any bowler who thinks that by putting in a few remarks he can get a batsman out - he'll do it - nothing to do with race at all - they want to win. 'If I think I can upset him, I'll upset him.' It's nothing to do with racism, it's modern day life".

As far as the umpires were concerned it is Asian sides that have been the source of most of what little racial conflict there has been. Apparently unaware of quite what he was saying, one respondent observed, 'It's the Muslims. They're the niggers in the woodpile.' And an incident was recounted:

"There was one match where they were beating the cars with sticks and trying to turn them over".

Some insisted that the Asians were abusive, but when pressed said they did not know what was said because they spoke in their own language, but 'it's the way that they say it'.

We also raised with the umpires the issue of perhaps greatest local concern, the failure of a local player from a minority ethnic group to play for the county side. The majority were persuaded by the claims of YCCC that if a player from a minority ethnic group was good enough he would be selected. Others were openly disbelieving:

"Load of baloney."

"It's a myth."

"Realistically, how many black players play for Yorkshire? Black players born locally in Chapeltown ain't got a hell of a chance."

"Not with the committee as it is now."

"And that's the truth."

"Too much old school tie".

Involvement and Development

Unlike the players, the umpires were strongly opposed to the use of overseas cricketers who were seen to be blocking the path for the development of local players ('nothing against the players, but...'). The suggestion that overseas players may provide positive role models for Asian and black cricketers did not seem to have been considered by the umpires and was not supported when introduced by the interviewers (the majority of overseas players are from Australasia anyway).

As with many of the players, the umpires saw the main route to improving the situation to be through encouraging as many as possible from all backgrounds to take-up the sport. The biggest single barrier to that was seen to be the lack of activity in schools now, so youngsters do not get a good introduction to cricket. It was suggested that those from minority ethnic groups who do get into the Yorkshire junior sides, are not coming through the schools, but have been picked out from clubs. There was concern that even white youngsters are not taking up the game and clubs struggle to fill U-18s and third teams.

It was also suggested that even among those who did get involved and showed talent, few retained their commitment:

"Youngsters don't want to go the step up to senior cricket because it's 50 overs and they want to meet their girlfriends at 8.00, or something".

Some of the umpires held the view that this was different in the minority ethnic communities

"They see it as a way to a better standard of living. If they can make the grade at cricket they've cracked it".

"If you go to Bradford or Dewsbury you see the youngsters out every night with a ball in their hand... We didn't used to have night clubs and television in our day...like the coloured people now that's their interest - they don't want to bother with watching television because they want to make their own pleasure like we used to do".

They were slightly disappointed therefore when a black umpire painted a picture similar to their own experience:

"We can't get the players cos they're not interested. They prefer to play football - everyone wants to play at Elland Road. You have to go round Sunday morning, knock on doors".

Although that level of success is likely for only a very few, African-Caribbean (though not yet Asian) youngsters see possibilities for advancement and success in football that they do not see in cricket.

The umpires were dissatisfied with the current set-up that depended too much on people being in the right place in the right time in order to get noticed, and one umpire suggested that what was needed was a scouting system like they have in soccer. One of his colleagues commented:

"I'm stopping umpiring next year and working for _____, and if I can find an Asian lad of 12 or 14 who I think can make it, I'll be knocking at his door. I won't be waiting for him to come along to find us".

Opinion was divided on whether Yorkshire's appointment of an ethnic minorities development officer would make a difference. Views ranged from 'Not a ha'porth' to 'It must'. It was suggested that for a young player from a minority ethnic group who did make it to the Yorkshire nets it might be a personally isolating experience without other black and ethnic minority players there to provide support. This was tied to the importance of socialising around the game and the recognition that this might be limited by separateness or exclusion. The same argument might, of course, apply at many of the league clubs though there have been a number of players who have managed to establish themselves at this level.

Although they were adamant that there was little racism in the game, the umpires generally were more likely to comment on what they perceived as the racism of minority ethnic groups; the black umpire was more alert to other manifestations of racism. It seems clear that our respondents would have no hesitation in doing their duty and dealing with any racism that they saw at matches. However, on the basis of the terminology they used themselves it is quite likely that they would not always recognise racist behaviours for what they are.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"He seems to love living up to the image of a hard-nosed Yorkshireman. I don't think I've ever played in a game against Yorkshiremen where there hasn't been a touch of racism".

(Syd Lawrence, quoted in the Daily Mirror, 13/11/96)

On its own this is cause for concern, but the club secretaries in our survey tended to think that there was more evidence of racism in the leagues than at the level of county cricket. If both assessments are correct, the implication is that there is considerable racism in the local leagues.

With a team like Yorkshire that draws such strength from its historical legacy it is not surprising that some of the adverse images of the past also live on. YCCC may be trying to make amends, but until they acknowledge the unwelcoming attitudes of the past they are likely to be treated with suspicion by people from minority ethnic groups. The most common position adopted by respondents was that YCCC might now be 'talking a good game', but are still well short of getting to grips with encouraging players from all ethnic groups.

There are, of course, different ways of expressing a sense of 'Yorkshireness' within cricket that can be more encouraging of cricketing talent from other cultures. For instance, in his latest book Marqusee (1996: 93-94) observes that Geoffrey Boycott is a widely respected cult figure in South Asia because of his love of cricket above racial/ethnic prejudice. This form of identity does not have to exclude others in order to express a sense of 'Yorkshireness' and is inclusive.

Although almost all the Asian and black players were able to recount experiences of racism in the leagues, the immediate response was normally that racism was not a problem in the game. Accusations of racism were not the first resort of cricketers trying to justify themselves. They recognised that some of their unpleasant experiences were the result of unwitting racism. Reactions could be broadly categorised as:

- Prepared to forgive if the people concerned were seen to be otherwise well-intentioned
- Prepared to tolerate the racism because they had got used to it in their everyday lives
- Hurt most if the racism was seen to threaten their chances of success - when used as a deliberate tactic by opposing players, when reflected in biased decisions by umpires and when resulting in double standards from officials.

In this last case reactions varied. Some were able to use it to fuel their determination to perform well; others were knocked out of their stride and put off their game by their own anger at the affront, especially when those in positions of power (e.g. the umpires) seemed to tolerate such expressions. As one of the Asian players we interviewed remarked:

"One of [their] players came up to me during my innings and said 'Get out you black bastard'. The umpire heard it and did nothing. I told my captain at the end of the match and he approached the individual and asked him to

apologise, which he did. It made me feel horrible and very angry, and in a sense spoilt my achievement".

Even among respondents who seemed genuinely committed to seeing the game of cricket advanced among minority ethnic groups there were many who used racial language that might easily cause offence. This was particularly so among the umpires and some club secretaries. Greater cultural awareness might lessen this and the distress caused by serving unacceptable teas. The cricketing tea is not just a meal, it is a 'cultural icon' that helps to define what the cricketing experience is about. It was made clear to Khalsa when they applied to join the Leeds League that the quality of their teas was one criterion by which their right to remain in the league would be judged. The tea is part of the social interaction surrounding the game that can do so much to contribute to an inclusive experience, but which may also exclude. Recent attention given to the significance of the social dimension of cricket has tended to focus on Muslims not wanting to join in the drink culture associated with cricket. This has most commonly been presented as being 'their' problem - 'they' should make the effort to get involved (it may of course also limit the accompanying socialising of other Asian, white or African Caribbean players who do not drink alcohol). Views on this, like many of the other topics we discussed were not simply divided: several white players were most sympathetic to non-drinkers who found themselves in this position, and one Asian player who did not drink himself was angry with other Asians who did not make the effort to socialise with their team-mates and opponents. Clearly it is important to recognise that cultural issues in cricket are not confined to deeds on the pitch.

Certainly our interviews revealed enough to demonstrate that there is indeed racism in the game, but some of our respondents felt that it was not as bad in cricket as in other sports they were involved in - 'it's this gentlemanly thing'. Equally though, it was evident that many players had just become inured to some forms of racism because they encountered them frequently in their everyday lives - they had been accepted as the norm. One respondent who talked animatedly about some of his experiences of racism in cricket was also keen to show a more positive side of the game:

"No I can't say I have [experienced racism]. They respect me. When I first started there weren't any other Pakistani players in that league, so they thought, 'Oh, he's Pakistani - he, must be good.' When we have a league meeting it's 50/50 white and Asian - we're not in separate parts of the room, we're all mixed up...One team out near _____ were really bad, saying silly things. Then the next time we played them they gave us pork sandwiches. You know cricket teas - they have chicken or beef, never pork. This year _____ was the worst. Both matches they were at us. And that umpire he was racist - nobody was out bowled. But Middleton were great. I used to be a taxi driver and they hate Pakis in Middleton, but the club were really great".

The fellowship of others in the game is highly prized. Branding and simplistic interpretations that accept no shades of grey do not help our understanding of complex issues like identity and racism.

When asked whether it made any difference if the team played against a predominantly Asian or black team, one of the respondents observed, 'I play to win, it don't make no difference.' But clearly it may make a difference if players think they can gain an advantage by using racist abuse to disrupt their opponents and increase their chance of winning. Certainly there is racism in society at large and so it may seem unfair to focus on an individual sport, but competition and the need to win may heighten racism especially in an era in which sledging has become more widespread.

It needs to be made clear to umpires that racist sledging is not acceptable (abuse of any kind should be unacceptable) and that they are obliged to report it to the league officials. Clubs might also be held responsible for any abuse by spectators occurring at their ground. The job of the umpires would probably be made easier if the leagues issued clear guidelines on acceptable behaviour and it was recognised that they would deduct points, impose fines and ultimately bans for those found guilty of racial abuse before during or after the games.

Certainly we feel that it is not acceptable to suggest that because people are cricketers they should be able to ignore racism and just get on with the game. Challenging racism though is not easy; it is not always amenable to rational argument, so it may only be possible to counter it with firm action by those in a position of authority (club and league officials and umpires). However that requires those concerned to recognise the racism, and some of the players were concerned that it was those in positions of power who were more likely to be racist than the players themselves.

It would be naive to assume that prejudice operates in one direction (from white to black). There were umpires who were keen to draw attention to what they saw as the racism of some Asian cricketers. However, while the majority of clubs, the major leagues and the professional game are controlled by people who are white, prejudice against black cricketers becomes more significant because it is allied with power to enforce personal prejudice.

Like the Yorkshire County Cricket Club, most of the league clubs insisted they were open to all, 'black, blue, green or yellow'. However, exclusion may happen accidentally if care is not taken to promote access. More cricketers are becoming aware that the social side that attracts them may act as a barrier to others, because they don't drink, because they don't talk about the same things or because they just feel outside the established circle. For any youngster it may be difficult to break in to a club, but if they lack the contacts to make the introductions it is especially hard, and those from minority ethnic groups are less likely to know people who will draw them in. This was highlighted by one Asian player when he observed:

"It's very difficult for an Asian or a West Indian lad, unless he's got a few mates with him, to go down to an all-white club. He's got to be really serious about playing to go and take the shit, so a lot of Asian lads will just not do it".

A related issue concerned the position of overseas players in the local leagues. Using established contacts to invite overseas players from Australasia rather than the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean reinforces the image of a white game and offers fewer representations of top quality Asian and black cricketers to admire. Limiting the number of overseas players may also limit the use of family and friendship ties among minority ethnic communities that are an important part of recruitment at most clubs. However virtually every player we interviewed, regardless of their ethnic group, was strongly in favour of overseas cricketers playing in the Yorkshire leagues, despite

the recent attempts by some league officials to impose further restrictions and in some cases to ban overseas players all together (see Greenfield and Osborn, 1996). The dominant view of our respondents was that far from 'diluting' local league cricket overseas players actually *strengthen* it by raising standards and generating extra interest, especially among the young.

As mentioned in the introduction overseas players have always been an integral part of league cricket nowhere more so than in Yorkshire where players of the stature of the great West Indian spin bowler Sonny Ramadhin, who played for Liversedge and Wakefield, have plied their trade over the years (see 'League Legends: The Sonny's still shining', in *Cricketing Yorkshire*, Issue 4 September 1996, pp 38-39). The benefits of such cricketers playing league cricket are considerable, especially in generating and sustaining the interests of young Asian and black cricketers, as was suggested in one of the interviews with a player from Khalsa who are reported to have signed the Pakistani Test batsman Ijaz Ahmed, thereby extending a long and proud, if somewhat hidden, tradition of Yorkshire's multicultural cricketing history.

While the white club secretaries almost all disagreed that the establishment of an all-Asian cricket league was conducive to the development of cricket, many more of the players (white, Asian and black) recognised that it was an understandable (though most thought regrettable) step in the current climate. As one player remarked:

"There are a lot of very talented Asian players out there but they are often passed over for white players. The formation of the Asian leagues were simply an act of desperation not an attempt at segregation, because we simply are not getting the opportunity which we deserve".

It has now been demonstrated that such leagues can act as 'stepping stones' for teams able to move into the established leagues. However, this is not an easy step. When Khalsa applied to join the Leeds League they felt they were made to jump through hoops that would not be expected of a white team, and that even when they had proved themselves they were still made to feel like outsiders, at best being tolerated by league officials rather than being welcomed for what they could offer.

It is easy to see why cricket leagues might want all 'their' clubs to have their own grounds, but it is a very exclusionary practice that makes it difficult for emerging teams to break into the inner circle.

When asked what was necessary to bring about an improvement, time and again the message from players of all ethnic backgrounds was that the position of cricket had to be re-established in the schools - everyone goes to school, but few find their way to the cricket clubs. Without the schools a lack of knowledge, contacts, support, transport or money may frustrate even the beginning of an interest in cricket. Schools need to be made aware of what is available through YCCC, local authority development officers and club schemes. Players identified the need for action by development officers rather than words and strategies, and the desirability of subsidised coaching courses so that fewer players, from all ethnic backgrounds, would be deterred by lack of funds.

It is also important that support and encouragement is provided to help players progress to the more advanced levels of performance and excellence. Without that support many promising players (not just those from minority ethnic groups) who lack the necessary resources and contacts will be deterred by the many barriers. That progression is vital if racists are to be denied the opportunity of saying, 'Well if they were good enough...' There are obvious rewards to be gained from nurturing talent rather than creating an environment that seems so alien that growth and development are stifled. As one young black player powerfully put it:

"I played for Yorkshire when I was 16 and I can see exactly why there's no [Asian or black players] there 'cause I didn't fit in at all. I felt like a complete outsider. I played for about two seasons and I hated it, I really hated it. It's hard to explain, but you feel like you're on a lower level. I wanted to play cricket at a high level and that put me off completely".

The appointment by YCCC of a development officer to work with players in minority ethnic communities was welcomed as a contribution to this more expansive development programme, but the league clubs themselves can play a part in encouraging the development of talent from all parts of the community so that Asian and black players do not feel odd and uncomfortable in cricketing environments. Liaison between schools, clubs, local authorities and YCCC is important if players are to progress as far along the continuum of sporting excellence as their potential will allow.

It was certainly not just players from minority ethnic groups that were made to feel alienated by the cliquey elitism that they felt was typified by the County. Many white players recognised that the right school, the right club, the right coach (even the right father) were important to make sure you fitted the County set-up. For genuine advances to be made it may be necessary to allow others beyond the cricketing establishment to be involved in decision making around how best to deploy the substantial sums of money to be made available from the National Lottery for cricket development in Yorkshire, especially if Asian and black cricketers are to be engaged. Moreover, much of the development initiative needs to happen in local communities, beyond what is perceived by some as the hostile environment of Headingley.

Whenever possible it would seem desirable for the various organisations (Yorkshire County Cricket Club, Yorkshire Cricket Association, the Black and Ethnic Minorities working group of the Sports Council, BEMSport and the sports development divisions of local authorities) to co-operate in pursuing their efforts to address racism even though they are each operating in slightly different fields. They will then be able to learn from the skills and experience of each other. Local authorities may have a particularly important part to play through making sure that their sports development work addresses cricket and formulating a cricket development plan alert to the issues of racism discussed in this report.

Our research did not set out to conduct an audit, but the Yorkshire Cricket Association might usefully do so to establish the number of Asian and black people there are within the current structures - players, umpires, coaches, club officials, YCCC committee members etc. There might also be rewards from a genuine concerted effort to increase the number of Asian and black umpires, especially where there are already large numbers of Asian and black players.

Because of the geographical location of our project we currently have little idea of how our findings compare with leagues elsewhere around the country. There is considerable scope for extending this research to other local leagues and also to the national and international scene.

From our research it seems likely that the most blatant racism will be dealt with, but other aspects will go unrecognised or ignored. There is clearly scope for working with the good intentions that abound. Recognising the corrosive effect of racism on those in the game opens the way to what one white cricketer called a 'multi-cultural cricket culture that represents the only way forward' - acknowledging, respecting and celebrating cultural diversity.

APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

Racism

The doctrine that the world's population is divisible into categories based on physical differences which can be transmitted genetically. Invariably, this leads to the conception that the categories are ordered hierarchically so that some elements of the world's population are superior to others.

Racialism

The action of discriminating against particular others by using the belief that they are racially different, and usually inferior. It is the practical element of the 'race' concept.

Institutional Racism

The policies of institutions that work to perpetuate racial inequality without acknowledging the fact. Douglas Glasgow refers to this as camouflaged racism, meaning that it is not open and visible, but concealed in the practices and procedures of organisations such as industries, political parties and schools.

Ethnic Group

A number of people who perceive themselves to be in some way united because of their sharing either a common background, present position or future - or a combination of these. The ethnic group is subjectively defined in that it is what the group members themselves feel to be important in defining them as a united people that marks them off, and not what others consider them to be.

Prejudice

An inflexible mental attitude towards specific groups of others based on unreliable, possibly distorted, stereotyped images of them.

Stereotype

A mental image held about particular groups of people constructed on the basis of simplified, distorted or incomplete knowledge of them. An example would be a stereotype of Jews: all of them are mean. This isn't accurate, but is a widely held stereotypical image of them.

Taken from Cashmore, E & Troyna, B (1983) Introduction to Race Relations. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY OF CLUB SECRETARIES

LETTER & QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO SECRETARIES OF CLUBS IN LOCAL CRICKET LEAGUES

12th July, 1996

Dear Club Secretary

Survey of Ethnic Minorities and Cricket

We are working in conjunction with the Yorkshire Cricket Association and Leeds Leisure Services to do a survey on the involvement of people from ethnic minorities in local league cricket. To do this we are writing to club secretaries to find out their opinions.

Some of the questions simply need you to tick a box, others give you a chance to write more about your views. It is your personal views that we are interested in, so there are no right or wrong answers. All replies will be anonymous, so in our report it will not be possible to connect an individual with any response.

It should not take more than about ten minutes to complete the questionnaire. When you have done so, please put it in the reply paid envelope and return it to us. We recognise that at this stage of the season you are likely to be especially busy, but we would be grateful if you could let us have the completed questionnaire within the next two weeks.

If you would like to be entered into a draw for free match tickets kindly supplied by Yorkshire County Cricket Club please put your name and address on the separate slip of paper and return it with the questionnaire. We can then separate the two so that anonymity of the questionnaire responses can be maintained.

If you would like to talk about the survey or need any further information, please feel free to get in touch with us by phoning Jonathan Long (ext 3575), Mark Nesti (ext 3560) or Ben Carrington (ext 4710).

Many thanks for your help.

Jonathan Long
Project Co-ordinator

Involvement of Ethnic Minorities in Cricket

Survey of Club Secretaries

We appreciate you taking the time and effort to give us your personal views, and will treat your responses in confidence.

To help us to analyse your responses we would first like some information about your club and yourself.

1. Did you previously play cricket at league or county level? Yes ☐1 No ☐2
2. How long have you been involved in the game of cricket?
3. How old are you?
4. Are you: Male ☐1 Female ☐2
5. Since this questionnaire is predominantly concerned with ethnic minorities how would you describe your ethnic background?
6. Which league does your first XI play in? -

7. How many of your players are from ethnic minorities?
 - a) Senior players (18+) _____ out of _____
 - b) Junior players (under 18) _____ out of _____
8. How many of your Management/Executive Committee members are from ethnic minorities?
_____ out of _____
- 9a. Do you retain an overseas player? Yes ☐1 No ☐2
- 9b. If 'yes', which country do they come from? _____
- 10a. Has your club done anything to try to encourage black and ethnic minority players?
Yes ☐1 No ☐2 Don't Know ☐3

10b. If Yes, what has been done?

11. Some clubs see themselves as being social organisations, for others winning is paramount. Please tick where you think your club fits on this scale.

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q	6q	7q
Winning is everything						The social side is most important.

12. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

* Overseas players are having a negative impact on league cricket in Yorkshire.

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

* Professional players should not be allowed to play in local leagues.

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

* Players should only be allowed to play for their local side if they have been born in that area.

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

* It is easier to run a team entirely from one ethnic group.

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

* Ethnic minority players get picked on at some clubs.

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

* There are never any racist remarks from our team and supporters.

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

* Too much is made of this black/white thing - in cricket they're all the same.

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

13. To what extent do you think "sledging" is an acceptable part of cricket on the field?

Acceptable / Just part of the game	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Sometimes acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Never acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

14. Most players at one time or another will receive abusive remarks from both players and spectators, but sometimes players get abuse because of the colour of their skin. Do you think this is:

Acceptable / Just part of the game	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Sometimes acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Never acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

15. In your view:	Asians	Afro-Caribbeans
15a. Are there any special characteristics of ethnic minority players that suit them to cricket? (If yes, please specify)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
15b. Are there any special characteristics of ethnic minority players that limit them in playing cricket? (If yes, please specify)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
15c. Do these characteristics make them more suited to particular batting, bowling or fielding roles? (If yes, please specify which)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 No <input type="checkbox"/> 2

16a. Is the formation of “all-Asian” leagues conducive to the development of cricket generally?
Yes ☐1 No ☐2

16b. Why do you say that? Please explain.

17. How widespread do you think racism is in local league cricket?

None Existent	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
A Small Amount	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
A Considerable Amount	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Throughout	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

18. Do you think that racism in county cricket is more or less extensive than in local league cricket?
- More extensive ☐1
The same ☐2
Less extensive ☐3
Don't know ☐4
- 19a. Have you heard of the 'Kick Racism Out of Football' campaign? Yes ☐1
No ☐2
- 19b. Do you think a campaign like 'Kick Racism Out of Football' would be a good idea in County / National Cricket?
- Yes ☐1 No ☐2 Don't know ☐3
- 19c. Why do you say that?

20. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

* Yorkshire C.C.C. was right to abandon its policy of Yorkshire only players.

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

* Asian and Black people living in England should support the England Cricket team?

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

* Given their ethnic origin, Asian and Black players are unable to perform to their full potential when playing for England.

1q	2q	3q	4q	5q
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire. Additional comments are welcome, please use a separate sheet if necessary.

**Please return the questionnaire in the prepaid envelope provided, to:
Jonathan Long / Rhodri Thomas, Leeds Metropolitan University, Calverley
Street, Leeds LS1 3HE.**

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